VERSES,

&c.

The fingers of Mr ——'s friends having been repeatedly soiled with the Ink profusely scattered on his Library table — Sir J.B.R. sent him a Port folio of Blotting paper, accompanied by an epistle, written in very humble prose. It was answered by the following Epigram

VERSES.

Your name, my Friend, shall shine as high
as that of ancient Blot:
The first instructor men to write
you teach them how to Blot

July. 1799

VERSES

ADDRESSED TO

A TRAVELLER.

LONDON:
1799.

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TELL me, Sempronius, why, forſaking home,
From realm to realm, our new-fledged ſtriplings roam?
Do they deſire to mark each ſhade of mind—
Each ſtate of man from ſavage to refin'd?
Or do they viſit every foreign clime,
To vary idleneſs and kill the time?

Bald-headed fools, 'tis you who raiſe my ſpleen,
Fathers who truſt the prudence of *eighteen!*
You, you I cenſure, while through Europe runs
The idle herd of your unbearded ſons;
Your's is the blame, while they their faults expoſe,
Of friends make ſtrangers, and of ſtrangers foes.

Forth from his College comes the artleſs boy,
Elate with hope, the dream of promiſed joy;
His is the ſun-ſhine of life's vernal hour,
When love firſt ſtrays to wanton Beauty's bower,
When young Delight, firſt unconfin'd and free,
Roves through the garden like the reſtleſs Bee,
Drinks the rich Juice, and the nectareous dew,
And ſtill repeated finds enjoyment new.

E'en at this age, with paſſions all on fire,
His boſom burning with uncheck'd deſire,
The youth proceeds to ramble Europe o'er,
Indulge in pleaſure, and reflect no more.
Where'er he goes, his fame before has flown,
And hungry ſharpers mark him for their own;
Pimps with impatience his arrival wait,
Expectant gamblers live on his eſtate;
Long-practis'd villains lay the certain ſnare,
And pamper'd paraſites new frauds prepare.

From ſhore to ſhore why does Viator range,
Curs'd with the ever-reſtleſs love of change?
Has he been robb'd of his domeſtic bliſs?
Or mourn'd the treaſon of a harlot's kiſs?
Has Death relentleſs raviſh'd from his ſide,
A long-lov'd miſtreſs, or a blooming bride?

None, none of theſe. Does debt then plague
his life?
Or the worſe torment of a jealous wife?
No! it is fame, for which Viator ſighs;
For fame alone his native land he flies!
For this endures, beneath the polar ſtar,
The cold of Zembla in his ſledge-built car;
Or faints with heat, where Ammon's temple
ſtands
A lonely ruin 'midſt a waſte of ſands.

For other climes than ours are form'd to pleaſe
The ſlothful ſons of luxury and eaſe.
The ſoft Italicus can ſcarce endure
Our ſombrous ſky and atmoſphere impure:
For him our bluſt'ring tempeſts blow too loud,
And fogs too frequent our green iſland ſhroud.

His nerves unſtrung, and ſenſitive all o'er,
He feels the ſearching Eaſt at every pore;
Still to thoſe beauteous plains he loves to turn,
Where Tiber pours his half-exhauſted urn;
Where Sol unclouded ſheds the genial day,
O'er realms made fruitful by his foſtering ray;
And ſportive Zephyr from his purple wing
Shakes balmy odours, and perennial ſpring.

This once was well. But, now, alas! no more
The traveller ſeeks Italia's alter'd ſhore.
Her fruitful fields, and her abundant ſoil,
Rude hands lay waſte, and fierce deſtroyers ſpoil;
Red with her people's blood her rivers flow,
And terror reigns from Tiber to the Po.
E'en Rome herſelf receives the victor's law,
Thoſe thunders huſh'd which held the world in awe;

And lo, where erſt ſupreme in regal ſtate
The tonſur'd Princes of the conclave ſat;
Where late the proſtrate and adoring crowd
Wept o'er the croſs, and at the altar bow'd;
Uncheck'd by laws, or human or divine,
With ſacred blood barbarians ſtain the ſhrine;
And on the ground where once peace-off'rings roſe,
The ſabre glitters, and the banner glows.

Not ſuch a ſcourge afflicted Latium knew,
When the fierce Goth imperial Rome o'erthrew;
Then ſavage hordes by thirſt of plunder led,
To war inured—amidſt its terrors bred—
A people caſt in Nature's rudeſt mould,
Made ſtrong by hardſhips, and by wants made bold—

Rough ſons of Mars, who rear'd 'midſt Winter's
ſtorms,
Bore his ſtern image on their iron forms—
Beheld with envious eyes new realms appear,
Where Spring eternal leads the laughing year;
With wonder ſaw the vernal roſe expand,
The vine luxuriant clothe the thirſty land,
Flowers, yet unknown, their painted leaves un-
fold,
And trees bend down with vegetable gold;
Yet theſe fierce robbers, barbarous, untaught,
Who lived by plunder, who for plunder fought;
With rev'rence bow'd before the holy ſhrine,
Nor violated laws believ'd divine.

Still, O my Country, ſtill I turn to thee,
By virtue, and by valour, worthy to be free!

Let Poets ſing of fairer climes than ours,
Heſperian gardens, or Idalian bowers;
Let travellers tell what richer ſoils may bring,
What fruits abound, what flowers ſpontaneous ſpring;
Here in the troubled hour, when tumult reigns
O'er half the world, and Anarchy regains
His empire loſt, truth, ſacred truth, prevails;
Impartial juſtice lifts her equal ſcales,
Long-try'd experience vindicates the laws;
And public worth needs none to plead its cauſe.

So when the raging winds o'er Afric's land,
Pour on the blighted plains the drifted ſand,
Perchance ſome ſpot amidſt the waſte is ſeen,
Still freſh with verdure, flouriſhing, and green,

Go then, vain madman, quit this happy ſhore,
The fount of Nile, or Niger's courſe explore;
And aſcertain in ſpite of burning ſuns,
How one ſtream riſes, and another runs.

THE END.